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HIGHLIGHTS

April 2007 Red Meat Production

Montana slaughter plants produced 1.2 million pounds, dressed weight, of red meat during April 2007, up 13 percent from April 2006 and up 5 percent from March 2007. Cattle slaughter totaled 1,500 head, 300 head above one year ago. The average live weight, at 1,186 pounds, decreased 13 pounds from last year.

During April, Montana plants slaughtered 1,000 hogs, unchanged from a year ago. The average live weight, at 254 pounds, was up 1 pound from last year.

April sheep slaughter in the State totaled 200 head, unchanged from April 2006. The average live weight increased 16 pounds to 106 pounds.

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.75 billion pounds in April, up 4 percent from the 3.61 billion pounds produced in April 2006.

U.S. beef production, at 2.02 billion pounds, was 2 percent above the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.70 million head, up 4 percent from April 2006. The average live weight was down 5 pounds from the previous year, at 1,235 pounds.

U.S. veal production totaled 11.8 million pounds, 14 percent above April a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 56,900 head, up 19 percent from April 2006. The average live weight was down 14 pounds from last year, at 347 pounds.

U.S. pork production totaled 1.71 billion pounds, up 6 percent from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 8.47 million head, up 6 percent from April 2006. The average live weight was down 2 pounds from the previous year, at 270 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 15.1 million pounds in the U.S., was down 11 percent from April 2006. Sheep slaughter totaled 216,900 head, 12 percent below last year. The average live weight was 139 pounds, up 3 pounds from April a year ago.

January to April 2007 U.S. commercial red meat production was 15.5 billion pounds, up 2 percent from 2006. Accumulated beef production was up 2 percent from last year, veal was up 12 percent, pork was up 2 percent from last year, and lamb and mutton production was down 3 percent.

April Milk Production Up 1.6 Percent

Milk production in the 23 major States during April totaled 14.4 billion pounds, up 1.6 percent from April 2006. March revised production, at 14.8 billion pounds, was up 1.2 percent from March 2006. The March revision represented an increase of 11 million pounds or 0.1 percent from last month's preliminary production estimate.

Production per cow in the 23 major States averaged 1,745 pounds for April, 19 pounds above April 2006.

The number of milk cows on farms in the 23 major States was 8.28 million head, 39,000 head more than April 2006, but 6,000 head less than March 2007.

Cattle County Estimates Available

The January 1, 2007 county estimates for all cattle and calves, beef cows, and milk cows are available on our website, http://www.nass.usda.gov/mt. January 1, 2007 sheep county estimates and December 1, 2006 county estimates for hogs and pigs and district estimates for chickens will be available at a later date.

The USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Montana Field Office compiles the only annual county estimates for Montana. The county estimates are based on livestock surveys conducted at the end of 2006 and beginning of 2007.

Questionnaires were sent to a sample of farmers and ranchers throughout Montana asking for information on the livestock inventories. Thank you to all the farmers and ranchers who participated in the survey!

U.S. Cattle on Feed Down 2 Percent

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.3 million head on May 1, 2007. The inventory was 2 percent below May 1, 2006, but 6 percent above May 1, 2005. This is the second highest May 1 inventory since the series began in 1996.

Placements in feedlots during April totaled 1.57 million, 3 percent below 2006 and 5 percent below 2005. Net placements were 1.47 million.

During April, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 375,000, 600-699 pounds were 263,000, 700-799 pounds were 430,000, and 800 pounds and greater were 505,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during April totaled 1.82 million, 2 percent above 2006 and 1 percent above 2005. Other disappearance totaled 99,000 during April, 14 percent above 2006, and 9 percent above 2005.

2006 Wheat Agricultural Chemical Use

Durum wheat producers in Montana applied a total of 20.6 million pounds of nitrogen fertilizer to 93 percent of the 400,000 acres planted for the 2006 crop. Eighty-two percent of the planted acreage received a total of 7.3 million pounds of phosphate fertilizer, while 0.3 million pounds of potash were used on 8 percent of the acres, and 0.1 million pounds of sulphur were used on 4 percent of the acres. Durum wheat producers applied 250 million pounds of herbicides to 89 percent of the 2006 durum wheat planted acres. The top three herbicides applied were Glyphosate iso. salt with 40 percent, 2,4-D, 2EHE with 30 percent of the acres, and Clodinafop-propargil with 29 percent of the acreage sprayed.

Montana other spring wheat producers applied nitrogen fertilizer to 86 percent of the acreage planted for the 2006 crop. A total of 129.5 million pounds of nitrogen fertilizer were applied to the 2.95 million acres of other spring wheat planted in Montana during 2006. Of the planted acreage, 81 percent received phosphate fertilizer, while potash was used on 21 percent of the acres, and sulphur was used on 10 percent of the acres. Total phosphate application was 57.7 million pounds, potash totaled 9.0 million pounds, and sulphur totaled 2.5 million pounds. Other spring wheat producers applied 2,172 million pounds of herbicides to 91 percent of the 2006 other spring wheat acres planted. The most common herbicides applied were 2,4-D, 2EHE with 47 percent of the acreage sprayed, followed by Glyphosate iso. salt with 43 percent, and Clodinafop-propargil with 23 percent.

Winter wheat producers in the state applied 96.8 million pounds of nitrogen fertilizer to 87 percent of the 1.95 million acres planted for the 2006 crop. Of the planted acreage, 84 percent received 46.2 million pounds of phosphate fertilizer, while 9.9 million pounds of potash was applied to 31 percent of the acres, and 2.0 million pounds of Sulphur were applied to 12 percent of the acres. Winter wheat producers used 2,315 million pounds of herbicides on 92 percent of the winter wheat acres planted. The top three herbicides applied were MCPA, 2-ethylhexyl with 63 percent of the acreage sprayed, 2,4-D, 2EHE with 54 percent, and metsulphuron-methyl with 24 percent.

In the U.S., two durum wheat producing States were included in the 2006 survey: Montana and North Dakota. Nitrogen applications averaged 62 pounds per acre per crop year and were applied to 92 percent of these States' planted acres. An average of 23 pounds per acre of phosphate was applied to 74 percent of the durum wheat planted acres in the Program States. Potash was applied to 7 percent of the planted acreage at an average of 9 pounds per acre per year in the States surveyed. Sulfur was applied on 4 percent of the acres planted with an average application of 4 pounds per acre per year.

Herbicides were applied to 95 percent of the durum wheat acreage in 2006 in the Program States. Glyphosate isopropylamine salt was the most widely used herbicide, applied to 47 percent of the planted acreage at a rate of 0.396 pounds per acre per crop year. The next most commonly applied herbicide on a per acre basis was Fenoxaprop-p-ethyl. It was applied to 37 percent of the acres at an average rate of 0.052 pounds per acre per year. That was followed by MCPA, 2-ethylhexyl applied to 34 percent of the planted acreage for durum wheat with an average rate of 0.274 pounds per acre per year.

The fungicide Propiconazole was applied to 5 percent of the durum wheat planted acres with an average rate of 0.056 pounds per acre per crop year. This was the only fungicide reported often enough to provide usage data.

In the U.S., six other spring wheat producing States were included in the 2006 survey: Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Washington. Nitrogen applications averaged 72 pounds per acre per crop year to 95 percent of these States' planted acres. An average of 32 pounds per acre per year of phosphate was applied to 85 percent of the other spring wheat planted acres in the Program States. Potash was applied to 27 percent of the planted acreage at an average of 18 pounds per acre per year in the Program States. Sulfur was applied on 13 percent of the acres planted at an average application rate of 13 pounds per acre per year.

Herbicides were applied to 93 percent of the Program State planted acreage. MCPA, 2ethyhexyl was the most commonly applied herbicide with 40 percent of the planted acres receiving one application. It was applied at an average rate of 0.281 pounds per acre per year. Bromoxynil octanoate was applied to 32 percent of the planted acres at an average rate of 0.241 pounds per acre per year. Glyphosate isopropylamine salt was used on 30 percent of all planted acres at an average application rate of 0.624 pounds was applied per acre per crop year

Insecticides were applied to 1 percent of the Program State acres, but each individual active ingredient was applied to less than one half of one percent of the planted acres. Dimethoate and Lambda-cyhalothrin were applied at an average rate of 0.384 and 0.023 pounds per acre per year, respectively.

Fungicides were applied to 15 percent of the other spring wheat planted acres in 2006. Propiconazole and Pyraclostrobin were each applied to 7 percent of the planted acreage at an average rate of 0.069 and 0.055 pounds per acre per year, respectively. Tebuconozole and Trifloxystrobin were each applied to 2 percent of the other spring wheat planted acres in 2006 with average rates per crop year of 0.101 and 0.074 pounds per acre, respectively.

Fourteen winter wheat producing States in the U.S. were included in the 2006 survey: Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington. Nitrogen applications averaged 64 pounds per acre per crop year and were applied to 80 percent of the Program States' planted acres. An average of 34 pounds of phosphate per acre per year was applied to 57 percent of the winter wheat planted acres in the Program States. Potash was applied to 17 percent of the planted acreage at an average rater of 49 pounds per acre per year in the States surveyed. Sulfur was applied on 14 percent of the acres planted at an average of 14 pounds per acre per year.

Herbicides were applied to 49 percent of the winter wheat planted acreage in 2006 in the 14 Program States. Glyphosate isopropylamine salt was the most widely used herbicide, applied to 15 percent of the planted acreage at a rate of 0.963 pounds per acre per crop year. The two next most commonly applied herbicides, on a per acre basis were 2,4-D, 2-EHE and Metsulfuronmethyl, at 14 percent with average application rates of 0.440 and 0.002 pounds per acre per year, respectively.

Insecticides were applied to 3 percent of the 2006 winter wheat planted acreage. Chlorpyrifos, at 2 percent, was the only insecticide applied to more than one half of one percent of the planted acres. It was applied at an average rate of 0.378 pounds per acre per year.

Fungicide treatments were applied to 2 percent of the winter wheat acreage in the Program States. Azoxystrobin, Propiconazole, and Pyraclostrobin were each applied to 1 percent of the winter wheat planted acres. They were applied at 0.055, 0.082, and 0.078 pounds per acre per year respectively.

U.S. May Potato Stocks

Montana potato stocks were not published for May 2007.

The 13 major potato States held 73.2 million cwt of potatoes in storage May 1, 2007, down 4 percent from last year and 17 percent below May 1, 2005, for comparable States. Ohio and Pennsylvania were dropped from the potato stocks program starting with the 2005 storage season. Potatoes in storage account for 19 percent of the 2006 fall storage States' production, down 1 percentage point from last year. Klamath Basin stocks were added to the potato stocks program starting with December 2006 and totaled 600,000 cwt on May 1, 2007. Klamath Basin includes California and Klamath County, Oregon potato stocks.

Disappearance of 309 million cwt from the start of harvest to May 1, is up 4 percent from last year. Shrink and loss, at 23.7 million cwt, is up 8 percent from the previous year.

Processors have used 162 million cwt of 2006 crop potatoes so far this season, up 8 percent from a year ago and 5 percent below 2 years ago. Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon total processing increased 8 percent from a year ago, Maine's total processing was 8 percent above the same date in 2006, and Washington and the rest of Oregon total processing was up 2 percent from last season. Dehydrating usage accounts for 34.6 million cwt of the total processing, up 15 percent from last year and 3 percent above the same date in 2005.

Idaho's potato stocks are down 11 percent from last year, while sheds in Washington held 20 percent less than last year, and Oregon's stocks dropped 4 percent from last season. Stocks in Wisconsin decreased 10 percent from 2006. Maine's potato stocks increased 26 percent from last year, North Dakota's sheds held 50 percent more, and stocks in Minnesota are up 52 percent. Potato sheds in Nebraska held 17 percent more than last season, while potato stocks in Michigan increased 80 percent, and California's stocks are up 13 percent from last year. Montana and New York's potato sheds combined held 30 percent more than on the same date in 2006. Colorado's potato stocks are unchanged from last year. Comparisons by region are not made in this narrative to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

Hired Workers Unchanged, Wage Rates Up 4 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 961,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of April 8-14, 2007, unchanged from a year ago. A large increase in California was enough to offset the large declines in hired workers in most other regions, resulting in a net change of zero from last April. Of these hired workers, 720,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 241,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of $10.17 per hour during the April 2007 reference week, up 39 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of $9.35 per hour, up 40 cents from last April, while livestock workers earned $9.55 per hour compared with $9.31 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at $9.41 per hour, was up 35 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 40.6 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down fractionally from a year ago.

The largest increases in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in California, Florida, and in the Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) and Mountain I (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming) regions. In California, last year's reference week was plagued by rainfall and unseasonably cools temperatures, which delayed most fieldwork. This year, a return to more normal weather patterns allowed cotton and rice planting to progress well ahead of average, increasing the demand for field workers. Cold, wet conditions in the Northeast II region slowed most outdoor field activities. However, continued strong demand from nurseries, greenhouses, and dairies was more than enough to offset the reduced need for workers in most other agricultural sectors. In the Mountain I region, dry, seasonable weather in Idaho offset below normal temperatures and damp conditions in the rest of the region, resulting in a collectively higher demand for hired workers. Florida experienced abnormally dry conditions last April. This year, soil moisture levels have increased, allowing more fieldwork to be accomplished and causing more hired workers to be needed.

The largest decreases in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia), Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), and Northeast I (New England and New York) regions. In the Appalachian I and II regions, hard freezes early in the reference week, along with heavy rains later in the week, severely curtailed most field activities. Therefore, the demand for hired workers in both regions was considerably lower. Frigid temperatures, torrential rains, and snow from two strong winter storms caused major fieldwork delays in the Corn Belt II, Southern Plains, and Northeast I regions. Field worker demand was down in all three regions due to these undesirable conditions.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Appalachian II, Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada, and Utah), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), and Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota) regions, and Florida. In the Appalachian II and Mountain II regions, the higher wages were due to a larger proportion of salaried workers putting in fewer hours, which pushed the average hourly wage higher. The higher wages in the Delta region were due to a greater percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers in the work force. In the Northern Plains region, the higher wages were due to a lower proportion of part time workers. The higher wages in Florida were due to a larger percentage of fresh market vegetable pickers in the work force. Tomatoes and other fresh market vegetables require extra care and skill during harvest to minimize crop damage. Therefore, these workers receive higher wages. (See table on back page.)

U.S. April Egg Production Down One Percent

U.S. egg production totaled 7.43 billion during April 2007, down 1 percent from last year. Production included 6.34 billion table eggs and 1.09 billion hatching eggs, of which 1.03 billion were broiler-type and 66 million were egg-type. The total number of layers during April 2007 averaged 344 million, down 1 percent from last year. April egg production per 100 layers was 2,162 eggs, down slightly from April 2006.

All layers in the U.S. on May 1, 2007, totaled 342 million, down 1 percent from last year. The 342 million layers consisted of 283 million layers producing table or market type eggs, 56.5 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and 2.87 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on May 1, 2007, averaged 71.1 eggs per 100 layers, down slightly from May 1, 2006.

Egg-type chicks hatched during April 2007 totaled 39.7 million, up 12 percent from April 2006. Eggs in incubators totaled 36.8 million on May 1, 2007, down 2 percent from a year ago. Domestic placements of egg-type pullet chicks for future hatchery supply flocks by leading breeders totaled 274,000 during April 2007, up 8 percent from April 2006.

Broiler-type chicks hatched during April 2007 totaled 801 million, up 2 percent from April 2006. Eggs in incubators totaled 680 million on May 1, 2007, up 3 percent from a year earlier.

Leading breeders placed 6.69 million broiler-type pullet chicks for future domestic hatchery supply flocks during April 2007, up 2 percent from April 2006.

Wage Rates for Hired Workers, by Region & U.S., April 9-15, 2006 & April 8-14, 2007 1/

U.S. and Region 2/	TYPE OF WORKER						Wage Rates for	All Hired Workers
	Field		Livestock		Field & Livestock			
	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
	Dollars per Hour							
Northeast I	9.71	10.10	9.54	9.59	9.65	9.90	10.49	10.77
Northeast II	10.54	10.34	8.80	8.56	10.10	9.80	10.75	10.55
Appalachian I	8.84	8.46	8.34	9.22	8.70	8.75	9.48	9.32
Appalachian II	8.20	8.64	7.75	9.07	8.00	8.81	8.85	9.77
Southeast	8.49	8.00	8.68	9.04	8.55	8.20	9.19	8.83
Florida	8.37	9.20	8.50	9.00	8.39	9.17	9.19	10.01
Lake	9.32	10.11	9.94	9.99	9.63	10.05	10.30	11.08
Cornbelt I	10.18	9.86	9.59	9.16	10.00	9.45	10.47	10.17
Cornbelt II	8.45	9.60	10.38	10.46	9.46	10.00	10.12	10.63
Delta	7.64	8.54	8.15	8.00	7.75	8.40	8.00	8.80
Northern Plains	9.67	10.04	8.64	9.75	9.25	9.91	9.84	10.63
Southern Plains	8.24	8.35	9.06	9.41	8.64	8.80	9.37	9.22
Mountain I	9.20	8.79	8.57	9.01	8.81	8.90	9.22	9.35
Mountain II	8.39	9.16	8.98	9.75	8.65	9.45	9.08	9.97
Mountain III	8.14	8.25	9.13	8.88	8.60	8.51	9.17	9.28
Pacific	9.24	9.39	10.13	9.70	9.45	9.45	10.10	10.24
CA	8.93	9.62	10.80	10.90	9.21	9.80	10.18	10.63
Hawaii 3/	9.79	10.60	3/	3/	9.93	10.77	11.96	12.85
US 4/	8.95	9.35	9.31	9.55	9.06	9.41	9.78	10.17

1/ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers. 2/ Regions consist of the following Northeast I: CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT. Northeast II: DE, MD, NJ, PA. Appalachian I: NC, VA. Appalachian II: KY, TN, WV. Southeast: AL, GA, SC. Lake MI, MN, WI. Cornbelt I: IL, IN, OH. Cornbelt II: IA, MO. Delta: AR, LA, MS. Northern Plains: KS, NE, ND, SD. Southern Plains: OK, TX. Mountain I: ID, MT, WY. Mountain II: CO, NV, UT. Mountain III: AZ, NM. Pacific: OR, WA. 3/ Insufficient data for livestock. 4/ Excludes AK.

COMING IN THE NEXT REPORTER

Barley County Estimates
Ag Prices Received
Winter Wheat Production
Wheat Supply & Demand

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